

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Keren Prescott and I live in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: *An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days*.

Paid Sick Days should be a human right for everyone who works.

Capitalism, racism, and ableism gatekeep my basic human right to need time to recover from illness! This makes it virtually impossible for marginalized folks to adequately care for themselves, their children, their partners, their loved ones, and their friends.

Yes, this is a racial justice issue.

It is racial justice to expand the definition of family to be reflective of the many different communities in CT. Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are known for taking care of folks who are not related by blood. We have informally adopted kids, nieces and nephews, and others into our family because we have to and want to and because we truly believe it takes a village. Forcing us to ignore the people in our village who we call family because we don't have that same understanding, is racism.

Waiting 680 hours is an act of violence against the working class. This is also ableist. When will you, and when will the elites, understand that if we do not have to stress about who is going to care for our best friend after their 3rd round of chemo, we can focus on our job bringing up our productivity? More importantly, I can keep my friend alive.

Covid19, the flu, long covid, MS, bipolar disorder, Lupus, sickle cell, cancer, doesn't give a damn about legislation or HR policy or waiting periods. It takes when it wants and gives you no time to prepare.

As a Black, queer, disabled woman, I struggle financially simply because I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, complex migraines, and a non-cancerous brain tumor. In Sept, I had a complex migraine that looked as though I had a stroke, the stress flared up my MS. I had just started a new job and had to use all my personal time because I did not have sick time. I could not get a full check after that because I did not have enough personal time. How am I supposed to work, if there isn't a real safety net for my needs?

Months later, my MS flared up, I went from walking on my own to using a cane. I sobbed because I knew I needed to see my doc and take a few days off, but I could not, since I had gotten sick a few months prior.

I want to work, but I had no option but to apply for social security. However, who can live off of \$1500 a month for a family of 4? Not me! Not when rent in CT is 1100 for a studio!

I WANT TO WORK! I CAN WORK! BUT I NEED A LITTLE HELP.

White supremacy tells me to pull myself up by my bootstraps so despite my MS, brain tumor, migraines, PTSD, bipolar disorder, and chronic anxiety, I work. And then when I get sick, I am purposely excluded.

Pass this bill and purposely include us!

I have been unable to keep jobs because I live in a world that prioritizes what you can produce or do and how fast you can get it done versus taking care of your health and your village. It is a shame that employers and our government still haven't figured out that if you take care of those that are viewed as having the least then we all can be taken care of.

It is mind-boggling that in 2023 after surviving a pandemic, we are still only offering 40 hours of paid time! Raise the minimum wage and raise the paid sick time from 40 to 80 TODAY!

We the people, the workers, deserve this. We are the oil that keeps America's engines running. Capitalism does not run on Dunkin, it runs on the working class and we get sick, our kids get sick, and our partners and loved ones be it blood-related or not get sick just like yours does, just like the CEOs do. Why are they entitled to help and not us?

This is why I support Senate Bill 1178: *AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS* and need a paid sick days law that:

1. Cover all workers regardless of employer size or industry!
2. Eliminates the waiting period to take a paid sick days!
3. Include all types of family structures and relationships which will allow workers to care for a child of any age, as well as their chosen family! The bill would also allow you to take paid sick time to care for a family member who experiences family violence or sexual assault.
4. Increase the number of hours of paid sick time workers can accrue and use per year from 40 to 80 hours.
5. Protect against future pandemics by allowing paid sick time to be used when a worker's place of work or child's school/place of care is closed by public officials for a public health emergency!

Thank you for your time,
Keren Pescott Manchester, CT